

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for treating fabric articles, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) contacting a fabric article with a first predominant fluid;
 - (b) at least partially removing the first predominant fluid from the fabric article;
 - (c) contacting the fabric article with a second predominant fluid;
 - (d) at least partially removing the second predominant fluid from the fabric article; and
 - (e) optionally, recovering the first or second predominant fluid;wherein the first and second predominant fluids are different.
2. The process according to Claim 1 wherein the first and the second predominant fluids are independently selected from the group consisting of water, linear or cyclic silicones, hydrocarbons, glycol ethers, a fluidized dense gas, and mixtures thereof.
3. The process according to Claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second predominant fluids is a lipophilic fluid.
4. The process according to Claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second predominant fluids is water.
5. The process according to Claim 1 wherein the first and the second predominant fluids have a difference in dielectric constant of at least about 10.
6. The process according to Claim 1 wherein step (a) is selected from:
 - (i) an immersive washing step wherein water is the predominant fluid;
 - (ii) a non-immersive washing step wherein water is the predominant fluid;
 - (iii) an immersive washing step wherein a lipophilic cleaning fluid is the predominant fluid;
 - (iv) a non-immersive washing step wherein a lipophilic cleaning fluid is the predominant fluid;
 - (v) an immersive washing step wherein a fluidized dense gas is the predominant fluid; and
 - (vi) a non-immersive washing step wherein a fluidized dense gas is the predominant fluid.
7. The process according to Claim 6 wherein step (a) is selected from (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).
8. The process according to Claim 1 wherein the process is carry out in a single laundering appliance.

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9. The process according to Claim 1 wherein the steps are performed sequentially from step (a) through step (d) and optionally, followed by step (e).
10. The process according to Claim 9 wherein the process further comprises:
rinsing the fabric article one or more times in the presence of a lipophilic cleaning fluid.
11. The process according to Claim 1 wherein the process further comprises:
performing a switchover of predominant fluids.
12. The process according to Claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and the second predominant fluids is used in the presence of an adjunct selected from the group consisting of surfactants, fabric softeners, enzymes, perfumes, pro-perfumes, bleaches, bleach activators, bleach catalysts, bleach boosters, suds boosting agents, buffering agents, chelants, brighteners, antibacterial agents, antistatic agents, non-softening fabric tactile modifiers, alkalinity sources, colorants, lime soap dispersants, odor control agents, odor neutralizers, dye transfer inhibiting agents, crystal growth inhibitors, demulsifiers, photobleaches, heavy metal ion sequestrants, anti-tarnishing agents, anti-microbial agents, anti-oxidants, anti-redeposition agents, soil release polymers, electrolytes, pH modifiers, thickeners, abrasives, divalent ions, metal ion salts, enzyme stabilizers, diamines, suds stabilizing polymers, solvents, process aids, sizing agents, optical brighteners, hydrotropes, and mixtures thereof.
13. The process according to Claim 12 wherein the adjuncts in the first and the second predominant fluids are different.
14. The process according to Claim 12 wherein the adjunct in the first predominant fluid is a cleaning adjunct and the adjunct in the second predominant fluid is a refreshment adjunct.
15. A process for treating fabric articles, comprising the steps of:
- (a) contacting a fabric article with a first mixture comprising a first predominant fluid, and optionally, a first auxiliary fluid that is different from the first predominant fluid;
 - (b) at least partially removing the first predominant fluid;
 - (c) contacting the fabric article with a second mixture comprising a second predominant fluid, and optionally, a second auxiliary fluid that is different from the first predominant fluid;
 - (d) at least partially removing the second predominant fluid; and

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- (e) optionally, recovering the first or second predominant fluid;
wherein the first and second predominant fluids are different and are independently selected from the group consisting of water, linear or cyclic silicones, hydrocarbons, glycol ethers, and mixtures thereof.
16. The process according to Claim 15 wherein steps (a) and (b) are independently an immersive washing step or a non-immersive washing step.
17. The process according to Claim 15 wherein the first predominant fluid and the first auxiliary fluid are different and the second predominant fluid and the second auxiliary fluid are different, each fluid is independently selected from the group consisting of water, linear or cyclic silicones, hydrocarbons, glycol ethers, and mixtures thereof.
18. The process according to Claim 15 wherein at least one of the first and the second mixtures is used in the presence of an adjunct selected from the group consisting of surfactants, fabric softeners, enzymes, perfumes, pro-perfumes, bleaches, bleach activators, bleach catalysts, bleach boosters, suds boosting agents, buffering agents, chelants, brighteners, antibacterial agents, antistatic agents, non-softening fabric tactile modifiers, alkalinity sources, colorants, lime soap dispersants, odor control agents, odor neutralizers, dye transfer inhibiting agents, crystal growth inhibitors, demulsifiers, photobleaches, heavy metal ion sequestrants, anti-tarnishing agents, anti-microbial agents, anti-oxidants, anti-redeposition agents, soil release polymers, electrolytes, pH modifiers, thickeners, abrasives, divalent ions, metal ion salts, enzyme stabilizers, diamines, suds stabilizing polymers, solvents, process aids, sizing agents, optical brighteners, hydrotropes, and mixtures thereof.

19. A process for cleaning a fabric article, comprising the steps of:

- (a) exposing the fabric article to a substantially aqueous cleaning medium comprising a first predominant fluid;
- (b) exposing the fabric article to a substantially non-aqueous cleaning medium comprising a second predominant fluid; and
- (c) at least partially removing the first or the second predominant fluid from the fabric article;

wherein the first predominant fluid is water and the second predominant fluid is a lipophilic fluid selected from the group consisting of linear or cyclic silicones, hydrocarbons, glycol ethers, and mixtures thereof; and

wherein step(b) occurs before and/or after step (a).

20. The process according to Claim 19 wherein steps (a) and (b) are independently an immersive washing step or a non-immersive washing step.

21. The process according to Claim 19 wherein at least one of the first and the second predominant fluids is used in the presence of an adjunct selected from the group consisting of surfactants, fabric softeners, enzymes, perfumes, pro-perfumes, bleaches, bleach activators, bleach catalysts, bleach boosters, suds boosting agents, buffering agents, chelants, brighteners, antibacterial agents, antistatic agents, non-softening fabric tactile modifiers, alkalinity sources, colorants, lime soap dispersants, odor control agents, odor neutralizers, dye transfer inhibiting agents, crystal growth inhibitors, demulsifiers, photobleaches, heavy metal ion sequestrants, anti-tarnishing agents, anti-microbial agents, anti-oxidants, anti-redeposition agents, soil release polymers, electrolytes, pH modifiers, thickeners, abrasives, divalent ions, metal ion salts, enzyme stabilizers, diamines, suds stabilizing polymers, solvents, process aids, sizing agents, optical brighteners, hydrotropes, and mixtures thereof.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claims 1-4, 6, 17-20, 24 and 25 would be allowed if the objection to the claims were overcome.

10. Claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

11. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art of record is Madore et al., US 5,057,240. The reference discloses liquid detergent fabric softening compositions comprising a silicone fluid softening agent, a carrier fluid, a nonionic surfactant and an anionic surfactant (col. 3, lines 29-45). Example IV discloses a composition comprising a silicone, tallow trimethyl ammonium chloride, water and silicone. However, the compositions of the Madore reference comprise larger amounts of the cationic softening agent than appear to be encompassed by applicant's fabric refreshment compositions.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any prior art made of record and not relied upon is of interest and is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to the examiner, Dr. John R. Hardee, whose telephone